



STATE OF CONNECTICUT • COUNTY OF TOLLAND
INCORPORATED 1786

TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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ROBERT J. CLEMENTS
Chairman

BOARD OF FINANCE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET HEARING WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2010

RICHARD J. CLEARY
MARK A. JOYSE
BARRY C. PINTO
MICHAEL D. VARNEY
JOSEPH E. WEHR

Members Present: R. Clements-Chmn (arr. 7:50), R. Cleary, M. Joyse, B. Pinto, J. Wehr,
M. Varney

Others Present: N. DiCorleto-Fin Officer, M. Blanchette-First Selectman, S. Cullinan-Supt
of Schools, A. Littizzio-Dir Bus Svs, L. Burstein and J. Prichard-
Selectmen, D. Keune-Chmn. BOE, G. Blanchette, M. Young, T. Kiff-
Judson and D. Roberson-BOE Members, School officials.

Call to Order

Richard Cleary called the hearing to order at 7:40 PM.

Citizen's Forum (Non agenda items) – None

Board of Education Budget Presentation

Board of Education Chairman Daniel Keune addressed the Board and introduced the budget. The Board of Education's goal is to form a budget that is good for the citizens as well as the children of the Town of Ellington. He then turned over the floor to Superintendent Cullinan.

He stated that the total budget increase is 4%. 1.86% of the increase consists of salaries, restitution of the furlough days and new staffing. This 1.86% includes a 1.5 teacher that was an identified need for the 2009-10 school year after the budget process was completed. An additional teacher for grade 2 at Center School and a .5 Kindergarten teacher at Windermere were hired due to increased enrollments. There are 100 kindergarten students attending Windermere School this school year. There are 5 retirements built into this budget. The teacher's contract calls for a 0% salary increase. Staffing increases were outlined. There were several Aides included in this request, and Mr. Cullinan stated that it is less costly to hire part time Aides than it is to outplace students because there is no Aide available. An additional grade 1 Windermere teacher will be needed for 2010-11 to accommodate those students in the kindergarten that are moving up, several positions that were lost last year are being added back, and an HVAC licensed employee for the maintenance division.

Mr. Cleary asked Mr. Cullinan how many positions were lost last year? He stated that there were six teaching positions and two custodial positions.

Insurance costs equates to 1.40% of the increase in the budget. This item was budgeted at an 11% increase even though they were quoted 14%. He told the Board that Anthem offered a discount if they included the life insurance program so they are doing that. Mr. Cleary then asked what they budget for insurance when adding a new position. He stated that the estimate is \$15,000 with the teachers currently contributing 18%.

In the Other category, the Athletic Restoration Plan was revised and the pay to play stays in place. The Handicap Services category is for nursing.

Utilities increased 2.95% but with the new dual fuel burners at Windermere and the Middle School, they expect their utility costs to be lower. They have not had enough experience to know exactly what they will save for an entire year.

Social Security increases are based on salaries. Program improvement includes the reading/writing workshop at Ellington Middle School. This program exists at the elementary schools and this budget brings it to the middle school. There is a school messenger program that informs parents in the case of an emergency. Last year transportation cost did not increase; this year it will increase 1%. Membership dues, textbooks and custodial supplies which have not been increased the last two years, make up the rest of the increase.

The Superintendent then went over the slides showing the class sizes and expenditures per pupil. Ellington is spending less than the State, the DRG and the other PK-12 Districts.

Chairman Clements asked Mr. Cullinan what the enrollment for Hartford students was and if they are included in these numbers. Kindergarten has 6 students from Hartford, grade 3 has 4 students, grade 4 has 2 students, grade 7 has 4 students and grade 9 has 5 students.

Areas of Concern are class sizes at the Kindergarten level because it is an unknown. They are planning to have 10 sections of Kindergarten again next year. Grades, 4, 5 and 6 at Windermere School are a concern. Windermere School which has more students than the High School only has 1.6 administrators. Out placed tuition - they do not want to have to outplace students because they cannot hire part time aides. Magnet school tuition can be an area of concern but they do not expect the State to make any changes this year. Under New Concerns is the municipal employee retirement fund or MERF. The State is charging the Town additional funds to make up for their losses. The Excess Cost Reimbursement is budgeted at 80% but could come in at 70%. The preschool transportation is a concern because there is need to address the length of bus trips.

Reductions taken to date amount to \$780,825.

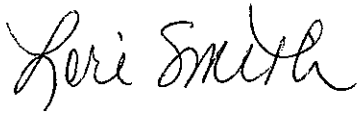
Mr. Clements asked if he could see the test results for Ellington pupils as compared to the State, the DRG etc. in a format the same as the slides showing the amount spent per pupil. Erin McGurk stated she would get that information for him.

Mr. Cleary asked if they had any experience with HSA's. Mr. Cullinan stated that this will be the second year since offering HSA's to the employees and they seem to be trending higher in

premiums than the PPO's are. They will continue to monitor and at some point may have to change the employee contribution rates for this option. They went out to bid for health insurance two years ago but the problem is that the other companies cannot match equal or better to what is presently in place.

The hearing was closed at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lori Smith". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Lori Smith, Recording Clerk